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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 15 MAY 1966

SUBJECT SITUATION REPORT FROM 0200 TO 1930 LOCAL TIME

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Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 93-68

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ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (15 MAY 1966)

FIELD NO.

SOURCE THIS IS A SOUTH VIETNAM SITUATION REPORT PREPARED
FROM 0200 TO 1930 LOCAL TIME ON 15 MAY 1966 BY CAS.

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1. [REDACTED] GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM MARINES
MOVED INTO DANANG BETWEEN 0200 AND 1400 HOURS ON 15 MAY 1966. DANANG
MAYOR NGUYEN VAN MAN REPORTEDLY FLED DANANG. ALL AIR VIETNAM FLIGHTS
WERE CANCELLED FOR 15 MAY, PRESUMABLY TO RESTRICT TRAVEL OF
UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS OR POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF GVN AIR TRANSPORT NEEDS.
AT 0400 HOURS ON 15 MAY. SAIGON POLICE RAIDED THE BUDDHIST YOUTH
CENTER AT 233 HIEN VUONG AND THE LABOR OFFICE AT 197 LE TAY WHICH
WAS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED LABOR YOUTH ASSOCIATION
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ANTI-UNITED STATES DEMONSTRATION ON MAY DAY.

2. AT 0630 SEVEN TANKS UNDER MARINE COMMAND TOOK OVER 1 CORPS
HEADQUARTERS IN DANANG, DISARMING VIETNAMESE ARMY TROOPS THERE. ONE
OR TWO PLATOONS OCCUPIED THE STRUGGLE HEADQUARTERS AT PHO DA PAGODA.

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THE SECOND MARINE BATTALION WAS REPORTED TO BE MOVING TOWARD DANANG FROM QUANG NGAI, AND THE SECOND BATTALION OF THE SEVENTH REGIMENT OF FIRST DIVISION WAS REPORTED TO BE MOVING TOWARD HUE FROM PHU BAI. SOME GRENADES WERE THROWN EARLY IN THE DAY, BUT NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED FROM EARLY ACTION. DANANG CITY WAS QUIET, WITH SKY RAIDERS AND OBSERVATION PLANES OVERHEAD. THE RANGERS WERE IN THE NORTH PART OF THE CITY, AND THE MARINES IN THE SOUTHERN PART.

3. THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT MOVED FAST TO SET UP DEFENSES IN MANY PARTS OF DANANG, AND THE STRUGGLE RADIO BROADCAST THE FOLLOWING MESSAGES:

A. "ORDER OF ARMED FORCES REVOLUTIONARY HEADQUARTERS:

(1) ARTILLERY STAND BY TO FIRE AT TWO TARGETS--MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AIRPORTS. (2) ANTIAIRCRAFT UNITS STAND BY AND READY TO FIRE. ISSUED FOR COLONEL DAM QUANG YEU, COMMANDING OFFICER, BY MAJOR TRAN HUU TRAI, CHIEF OF STAFF."

B. "A CALL TO THE MARINES: YOU SHOULD JOIN THE RANKS OF REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE IN I CORPS TO FIGHT AGAINST KY AND HIS PUPPETS TO BUILD A TRUE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY."

4. AT 0715 HOURS COLONEL YEU FLEW TO HOI AN FROM DANANG. HE ALERTED THE QNSS MILITARY COMMAND, AND DEPLOYED AN ARMORED PERSONNEL SQUADRON TO GUARD THE CITY AND APPROACHES. SOMETIME DURING THE MORNING

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TWO COMPANIES OF THE 39TH RANGER BATTALION, NORMALLY STATIONED AT QNSS HEADQUARTERS IN HOI AN TRIED TO MOVE TOWARD MIEU BONG, SOUTH OF DANANG, BUT WERE BUZZED BY A VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE (VNAF) FIGHTER PLANE, AFTER WHICH A LIGHT VNAF AIRCRAFT DROPPED A MESSAGE TO THE COLUMN WARNING IT NOT TO PROCEED TO DANANG. YEU ALLEGED THAT PAT ELEMENTS IN QUANG NAM WERE ASSEMBLING AT DIEN BAN WITH THE INTENTION OF MARCHING NORTH TO DANANG. (FIELD COMMENT. PRESUMABLY YEU WAS IMPLYING THE PAT ELEMENTS INTENDED TO GO TO THE ASSISTANCE OF GVN FORCES IN DANANG.)

5. AT 1000 HOURS AN ORDER ORIGINATED BY SECOND DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL LAM WENT INTO EFFECT RESTRICTING ALL TROOPS UNDER LAM'S COMMAND TO QUARTERS. ON DISTRIBUTION WERE ALL MILITARY UNITS, THE BUDDHIST CHAPLAIN CORPS, AND THE PAT OFFICE. DEPUTY PROVINCE CHIEF LE TICH THIEU AT TAM KY ISSUED THESE ORDERS TO ALL MILITARY IN HIS AREA. PROVINCE CHIEF NGUYEN THANH TOA WAS IN DANANG AT THIS TIME AND WAS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO TAM KY ON THE MORNING OF 15 MAY. (FIELD COMMENT. THIEU HAS BEEN CONSIDERED TO BE PRO-STRUGGLE BECAUSE OF HIS PAST AFFILIATIONS AND HIS ACTIONS DURING THE RECENT STRUGGLE MOVEMENT.)

6. AT ABOUT 1000 HOURS ON 15 MAY GENERAL LAM RETURNED TO QUANG NGAI FROM DANANG; HE HAD REPORTEDLY FLOWN TO DANANG AT 0800 HOURS. ONE TANK APPEARED AT "THE PAGODA" AT QUANG NGAI AND THEN LEFT. ONE BATTALION OF MARINES LEFT QUANG NGAI FOR DANANG VIA AIR VIETNAM.

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QUANG NGAI CITY WAS PLACED OFF LIMITS TO THE MILITARY.

7. AT 1030 HOURS THE STRUGGLE RADIO AT DANANG ANNOUNCED THAT THE RADIO WAS UNDER ATTACK AND COMING UNDER CONTROL OF THE GVN FORCES. GENERAL NGUYEN CHANH THI WAS REPORTEDLY IN GENERAL NHUAN'S FIRST DIVISION COMPOUND DIRECTING OPERATIONS. AN ARMY OFFICER WAS REPORTEDLY IN CONTROL OF THE TOWER AT PHU BAI WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO PREVENT THE LANDING OF TROOP CARRIERS. THE FIRST AND SECOND MARINES WERE REPORTEDLY IN DANANG.

8. AT 1120 HOURS ON 15 MAY PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS IN HOI AN, WHERE COLONEL YEU IS LOCATED, WERE BROADCASTING THAT GENERAL WALT AND AMBASSADOR PORTER SUPPORTED THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE KY GOVERNMENT AND THAT I CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL DINH WAS ORDERING TROOPS TO FIGHT THE INVADERS.

9. IN HOI AN, BUI QUANG SAN, S-2 OF RCC AND S-2 FOR THE VIETNAMESE NATIONALIST PARTY (VNQDD) WENT TO COLONEL YEU'S OFFICE AT YEU'S REQUEST, AND WAS APPARENTLY CAPTURED BY YEU, ACCORDING TO A HOI AN BUDDHIST WHO IS OPPOSED TO THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT. AT 1130 HOURS COLONEL YEU INSTRUCTED BUDDHIST MONKS TO TELL ALL YOUNG BUDDHIST MEN TO ASSEMBLE AT THE PAGODA, AND THOSE RESPONSIVE TO HIS ORDERS ASSEMBLED THERE. COLONEL YEU RELEASED SAN AFTER INSTRUCTING SAN TO GIVE ORDERS TO PAT ELEMENTS AND APA'S UNDER SAN'S SUPERVISION TO SUPPORT YEU

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IN THE COMING FIGHT WITH THE GVN FORCES. SAN CLAIMED THAT HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO GIVE SUCH ORDERS, AND LATER SAID THAT HE PLANNED TO WAIT UNTIL THE GVN FORCES CAME TO HOI AN AND THEN HE WOULD INSTRUCT HIS PEOPLE TO FIGHT WITH THE GVN AGAINST YEU. ACCORDING TO SAN, YEU APPEARED VERY NERVOUS AND WORRIED ABOUT THE FACT THAT GVN FORCES HAD CAPTURED KEY POINTS IN DANANG.

10. AS OF 1200 HOURS IT APPEARED THAT GVN FORCES WERE RAPIDLY GAINING CONTROL OF DANANG. THE ELEVENTH RANGER BATTALION REPORTEDLY JOINED THE MARINES IN SWEEPING DANANG.

11. IN HUE THERE WERE STRONG INDICATIONS THAT THE FIRST ARMY OF VIETNAM (ARVN) DIVISION WOULD DEFEND THE ELEVENTH TACTICAL ZONE, THE NORTHERNMOST ZONE OF I CORPS. THE FIRST DIVISION WAS BRINGING ITS TANKS TOWARD HUE FROM POSITIONS IN THE NORTH. THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE FIRST DIVISION WAS MEETING WITH "OLD STRUGGLE LEADERS."

12. IN DANANG HEAVY BUT SPORADIC FIRING BROKE OUT AT 1330 HOURS AGAINST THE BUILDINGS SURROUNDING RADIO DANANG AND TRUONG BO DE BUDDHIST SCHOOL; THE FIRING CONTINUED FOR ONE HOUR. THE FIRING PATTERN SEEMED TO BE INITIATED BY THE MARINES, WHO FIRED HEAVILY ON THE OBJECTIVES, AND, ALTHOUGH THE RETURN FIRE WAS SLIGHT, MOVED TO NEW POSITIONS AND REDUCED FIRE PATTERN. THE SITUATION

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THEN BECAME ONE OF SEIGE, WITH OCCASIONAL SHOTS BEING EXCHANGED. ELSEWHERE IN DANANG CITY THE MARINES APPEARED TO HAVE REINFORCED THEIR CONTROL OF KEY POINTS, INCLUDING THE STRUGGLE HEADQUARTERS AT PHO DA PAGODA.

13. ALL REMAINED QUIET IN TAM KY AND HUE. HOWEVER, IN HUE WORK HAD CEASED AS A RESULT OF A GENERAL STRIKE AND THERE WAS A STRUGGLE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 1600 HOURS. THE FIRST DIVISION REPORTEDLY HAD FORCES READY TO MOVE TO THE HUE AIRPORT IF THE GVN ATTEMPTED A MILITARY MOVE AGAINST THE CITY.

14. SOMETIME BEFORE 1800 HOURS, 2,500 PEOPLE IN HUE ATTENDED A BUDDHIST MEETING AT WHICH GVN ACTION IN DANANG WAS CONDEMNED AND A PLEDGE FOR SUPPORT OF THE STRUGGLE WAS MADE. RADIO HUE, WHICH IS CONTROLLED BY STRUGGLE FORCES, STATED IN AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BROADCAST THAT ALLIED FORCES WERE STANDING BY THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT. THERE WAS NO ACTIVITY BY THE FIRST DIVISION EXCEPT PASSIVE DEFENSE OF HUE CITY. GENERAL THI WAS RUNNING THE SHOW AND WAS EXTREMELY ACTIVE.

15. A MEETING AT TINH HOA PAGODA CALLED BY COLONEL YEU FOR 1930 HOURS WAS ATTENDED BY 25 TO 30 YOUNG MEN. YEU'S MESSAGE WAS THAT HOI AN WOULD BE ATTACKED BY GVN TROOPS AND THE YOUTHS SHOULD TELL EVERYONE TO BE READY TO SOUND THE ALARM WHEN THE TROOPS ARRIVED. POLICE CHIEF MINH OF QUANG NAM IN HOI AND HIS CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, TO VAN TAM, WERE SPENDING THE NIGHT AT THE STRUGGLE COMMITTEE IN TINH HOI PAGODA.

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16. FIELD DISSEM. STATE USMACV USAID JUSPAO NAVFORV
USARV 7TH AIR FORCE CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF PACFLT.

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